

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 and 14 are amended. Applicants appreciate and thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 15 is allowed.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Sakakibara (U.S. Patent No. 4,679,129); rejects claims 6, 7, 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sakakibara; rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sakakibara in view of Jacobson (U.S. Patent No. 5,151,852); rejects claims 9 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sakakibara; and rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sakakibara. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants have incorporated the features suggested in Item 8 of the Office Action into independent claims 1, 10 and 14. Therefore, independent claims 1, 10 and 14 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2-9 and 11-13 depend from the respective independent claims, and therefore also define patentable subject matter. The Office Action has indicated that claim 15 defines patentable subject matter.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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